

NEWS RELEASE

SUBJECT: **£15m investment for retirement village**

DATE: 13 November 2007

Work is now officially underway for the first 'extra care' village development in Newcastle-under-Lyme that will give new options for older people to continue living independently.

A partnership of Aspire Housing, North Staffordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT), Newcastle Borough Council, RENEW, Prima 200 North Staffordshire and national regeneration agency English Partnerships, formally signed a contract on 8th November. This marks the official start of the development.

The partnership announced 'Mill Rise' as the proposed name for the new development and 'Milehouse Primary Care Centre' for the name of the on-site health facilities. Aspire Housing has recently recruited Suzie King as the Project Manager to move the development forward.

Caroline Simpson, Director of Business Development, Aspire Housing, is delighted with the official launch of the development, saying: "We are all really excited about 'Mill Rise' as a vital link in the regeneration work that is taking place in the area.

She continued: "The new development will provide older people with modern care and support facilities and give them an opportunity to continue living independently. With access to high quality housing, the development will give people a better quality of life and access to the vital services they need."

The new development is being funded by Aspire Housing, North Staffordshire PCT, Newcastle Borough Council, Prima 200, Staffordshire County Council and the Housing Corporation. It has also been supported by English Partnerships, who bought the land in 2004, and by RENEW North Staffordshire.

Based in a priority area in the RENEW North Staffordshire housing market renewal programme, 'Mill Rise' will host a state-of-the-art health centre, developed by North Staffordshire PCT and will act as a base for the three local GP practices in the Knutton and Cross Heath area.

Andrew Millward, North Staffordshire PCT Chairman, said: "We are thrilled that work has officially commenced on the 'Mill Rise' development and that we are a partner in this exciting venture.

He continued: "Residents will have health services on their doorstep and the centre will provide them with an on-site pharmacy. We are also committed to providing our NHS dental services from the centre in the future, addressing the health needs of the local community."

In addition, 'Mill Rise' will also host physiotherapy, chiropody and podiatry services, alongside a number of other services, including a hairdresser, restaurant, hobby room and many others.

The development will be set in beautiful landscaped surroundings and will be built under the LIFT (Local Improvement Finance Trust) scheme by Prima 200. It will be built to high design and environmental standards and will act as a catalyst to the wider regeneration of the Knutton and Cross Heath area.

Ann Pursey, Chief Executive of Prima 200 is excited to commence work on the project, she said: "This scheme is a wonderful example of partnership working and shows what can be achieved when agencies work together on a community project. The scheme will provide a focus for services for local people of all ages, from children to older people."

Neale Clifton, Executive Director for Regeneration and Development at Newcastle Borough Council, welcomed the practical start of this development, saying: "I am delighted that local people can look forward with confidence now to the provision of both a wider range of health services and supported housing in their community in this joint scheme, that will be built to high design standards. The development will make a vital contribution to the emerging regeneration plans for this neighbourhood".

David Charmbury, English Partnerships' Regeneration Manager, said: "English Partnerships bought the land for this development to help kick start the wider regeneration of Knutton and Cross Heath area. With this agreement between partners we will now see high quality new homes and health facilities that will help make this an attractive and popular place to live."

Rob Kilby, Investment Manager for the Housing Corporation, West Midlands, said: "The Housing Corporation is delighted to see that this major project is now about to start. The investment we are making into the extra care facility will help accelerate the regeneration of the local community and help the next phases of housing come forward. The development is a key element of the master plan for Knutton and Cross Heath "

'Mill Rise' will host 60 apartments, with a mix of one and two-bedroom accommodation, along with the new health centre. People will have the opportunity to rent or part-buy property. The rest of the site will be developed, at a later stage, by Bellway (RENEW's development partner in the area), providing 160 high quality homes.

The target completion date of 'Mill Rise' is early summer 2009.

For any further information about the 'Mill Rise' development, please contact Suzie King on 01782 635 200 or email her at sking@aspirehousing.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

Aspire Housing provides over 12,000 customers with quality affordable homes across North Staffordshire and South Cheshire.

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North Staffordshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) was formed on October 1st 2006 - following the merger of Newcastle-Under-Lyme Primary Care Trust and Staffordshire Moorlands Primary Care Trust – as the NHS body responsible for health services for 210,000 plus combined population.

The PCT employs over 1,200 staff and directly provides a range of community nursing and therapy services - district nursing, health visiting, school nursing, speech & language therapy, physiotherapy and intermediate care - and is responsible for all GP practices, NHS dentists, community pharmacists and optometrists in the area.

North Staffordshire PCT also manages the community hospitals and health centres across its area. It continues to develop the range of community based services to provide care and treatment closer to home, remaining true to its aim of making good things happen quickly whenever possible.

For further details contact: T: 01538 487234; F: 01538 487255; W: www.northstaffordshire-pct.nhs.uk

English Partnerships is the government's national regeneration agency delivering high quality, sustainable growth in England. We do this by developing our portfolio of strategic projects and acting as the government's advisor on brownfield land.

We also ensure that surplus public sector assets are used to support wider government objectives. English Partnerships helps create communities where people can afford to live and want to live. Information on projects and programmes can be found at www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

English Partnerships and the Housing Corporation are working with the Department for Communities and Local Government to establish the proposed Homes and Communities Agency.

The Housing Corporation is the Government agency responsible for investing in new affordable homes and regulating over 1,500 housing associations across England. Its biggest ever investment programme of £3.9 billion for 2006-08 will fund 84,000 homes; 49,000 of these will be for affordable rent, and 35,000 will be for affordable sale through the Government's new HomeBuy initiative, helping people to get a foot on the property ladder. The Housing Corporation and English Partnerships are working with the Department for Communities and Local Government to establish the proposed new national housing and regeneration agency, Communities England.